Setting up of IRDA Headquarters at Hyderabad

*435. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Andhra Pradesh Government has urged the Central Government to locate the Headquarters of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority at Hyderabad; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALA SAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) is presently located in Delhi. Government has constituted the Authority only on 19th April, 2000 with the appointment of Chairperson and two whole time Members. Government has received requests from several State Governments including Andhra Pradesh to locate the headquarters in their States. The requests would be considered for appropriate decision, at the appropriate time.

Development of new tourist destinations

*436. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the figures of tourist inflow during the last fiscal year to India in general and Goa and Rajasthan in particular;

(b) the names of the major tourist destinations in the country which are being identified for future; and

(c) how they will be developed to attract more foreign tourists to get a Lion's share in the international tourist traffic?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Total number of foreign tourists who visited India during April 1999 to March 2000 is 25,16,790. According to the statistics available from the State Governments, the estimated number of visits of foreign tourists in the State of Goa and Rajasthan during the year 1999 were 284298 and 562685 respectively.

(b) Following destinations have been identified in the country for development through the joint efforts of Central and State Governments and private sector:—

(i) Ajanta-Ellora (Aurangabad)

(ii) Andaman Islands

(iii) Bekal Beach

(iv) Diu (Daman & Diu)

(v) Kangar (Pong Dam)

(vi) Lakshadweep Islands

(vii) Manali (Solang Nalah)

(viii) Muttukadu-Mamallapuram

(ix) Puri

(x) Sindhudurg

(xi) Kutch District

(xii) Dangs-Saputara Hill Station.

(c) The development of tourist destinations is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/U.T. Administration. Ministry of Tourism, however, provides Central financial assistance to them for specific proposals prioritised in consultation with them every year. During the year 1999-2000 an amount of Rs. 95.22 crores was sanctioned for implementation of various projects including development of identified destinations.

Financial assistance for promotion of art and culture in Maharashtra

*437. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of grant Government have given to various societies in Maharshtra for promoting culture and art especially in Adivasi districts of the State during 1999-2000.

(b) the agency or source to which this grant has been given by Government as an assistance to promote culture and art in the State?